Art 5391.621
Fall 2021

Modern Philosophies of Art: from Baudelaire to Baudrillard

Professor: Dr. David A. Lewis
dlewis@sfasu.edu (use this instead of through D2L), tel. 936-468-4804, ext. 4328
Office AR 102 (turn right after the Art Office entrance, first door on the facing wall).
Office Hours: M/W 1:30am-4:30AM; T/R 2:30-5:00pm and by appointment
(additional hours can be made available during exam week)

Face-to-Face Class meets in Art Building, Room 106, M/W 5:00-6:15PM
ZOOM access will be available during the regular class period.
Classes will be recorded on ZOOM and posted to D2L-BrightSpace for review.

Principal Text:

Professor Lewis will also provide several readings as handouts/D2L Brightspace postings from time to time, beginning with the following:

Supplemental reading: George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” [One of the best guides for any scholar wanting to understand how to—and how NOT to—write effectively and escape the pedantry of academic writing]

Other Resources:

Document Sources—
Herschel B. Chip, Theories of Modern Art, A Sourcebook by Artists and Critics, 1984
Kristine Styles and Peter Selz, eds. Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art, A Sourcebook of Artist’s Writings, 1996

Histories—
Robert Rosenblum, 19th Century Art, second edition, 2004
Sam Hunter, John Jacobus, Daniel Wheeler, Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 2000
Erika Doss, American Art of the 20th-21st Centuries, 2017
Michael Archer, Art Since 1960, 1997
Wanda M. Corn, The Great American Thing; Modern Art and National Identity, 2001
Barbara Haskell, The American Century: Art and Culture, 1900-1950, 1999
Patricia Hills, Modern Art in the USA, Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century, 2000
David Hopkins, After Modern Art, 1945-2000, 2000
Patricia Kaplan and Susan Manso, Major European Art Movements 1900-1950, 1977

Critical Theory—
Christopher Butler, Modernism, A Very Short Introduction,
Postmodernism, A Very Short Introduction, 2002
Catherine Belsey, Poststructuralism, A Very Short Introduction, 2002
COURSE DESCRIPTION:

ART 5391 is a reading intensive course investigating the ideas and issues of modern art and some postmodern art theories, from Baudelaire to Baudrillard. Working within the framework of an “Art in Context” approach, lectures and discussions will examine representative works and seek to place them within the broader historical milieu. The instructor encourages lively discussion among the students, who may wish to explore more fully certain issues raised in either the class lectures or assigned readings.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

ART 5391 provides an intensive introduction to key theories of modern art from Baudelaire through Baudrillard. Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate the ability to identify and know the significance of major European and American theorists as they relate the following larger themes and concepts of modern (and some postmodern) art theory:

1) the idea of Modernity; the change from Modern to Postmodern thought & experience
2) Conceptions of reality and unreality as defined by artists, critics and theorists
3) the Rational vs. the Irrational in the creation and interpretation of modern art
4) the relationship between the individual and the social (the ego and the other)
5) the nature and role of Avant-garde cultures and subsequent decay in Postmodern art
6) Art and Politics, and the roles of arts and critics in a rapidly changing society
7) Art Theory (theories) and the transformation from modern to postmodern modalities.

Class meetings will normally consist of introductory lectures and discussions of assigned readings (assignments will be announced weekly). Each student will also take a turn at leading a discussion section, both individually and in groups. It is important to be especially well prepared for days in which the student acts as discussion leader: have key passages marked and offer questions and/or arguments for interpreting the writings in specific ways. There will be three exams, a term project (to be determined by the student in consultation with the supervising professor), and a final critique session (attendance and active participation in the critique session is mandatory).
Regular attendance and participation is essential and required. Two absences are allowed without consequence, but students may expect a ten-point reduction of the final course grade for each additional absence: no excuses will be accepted.

**STUDENT EVALUATION:**

Exams: 3 @ 100 pts. Each [Includes the final exam]
Class participation: 50 pts.
Class presentation or project: 50 pts.

**TERM PROJECTS:**

Each student will develop a lecture or paper topic individually in conference with the instructor. Students may wish to consider aspects of a particular theory (e.g., Formalism, Post-structuralism), theorist or critic (e.g., Fry, Greenberg, Barthes, Lacan), or artist responding to (or embodying) aspects of a specific critical theory (e.g., Dali responding to Freudian psychology, or comparing Andy Warhol’s use of pop culture with Marshall McLuhan’s theories of mass media culture. Plan on 5 to 7 pages of text for an 25 to 40 minute presentation. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor and discuss one or two drafts of their presentation or paper well in advance of the due date. Presenters will need to submit their lecture notes in legible outline form, with bibliography. Students electing to submit a paper without presenting it, must use standard footnote and bibliographic apparatus and conform either to the *MLA Handbook*, Turabian’s *Guide*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Students are strongly encouraged to consult Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style* once they have completed a draft of their papers and begin making revisions for the final copy.

**TERM SCHEDULE:**

This term, the ART 5391 class assignments will be structured loosely to allow for focus on topics that may prove to be of greater importance to class participants: not all readings listed below will be given attention in class discussion, but those that aren’t are listed for your independent review. Regular class times will be strictly observed.

*Course schedule is subject to modification.*

Readings may vary from the schedule below and will be assigned weekly. Introductory notes/lecture will generally precede each class discussion.

**Week#  Topics and Reading assignments:**

   **Handout**: Madame Blavatsky, "What Is Theosophy," (1879)

   Harrison and Wood (Hereafter H&W), *Art in Theory*, selections:  
   Sigmund Freud, from “On Dreams” (1901)
Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1902-03)
Henri Bergson, excerpt from “Creative Evolution” (1907)

3. Sept. 6, 8
Readings: H&W, Wilhelm Worringer, from Abstraction and Empathy (1908)
Handout: Henri Matisse, from “Notes of a Painter” (1909)
H&W, Wassily Kandinsky, from Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1911)
H&W, Benedetto Croce, “What is Art?” (1913)
H&W, Clive Bell, “The Aesthetic Hypothesis” (1914)

4. Sept. 13, 15
Readings: H&W, Guillaume Apollinaire, “The Cubists” (1911)
and Excerpt from The Cubist Painters (1912)
H&W, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, from The Rise of Cubism (1915-20)
H&W, Georges Braque, “Thoughts on Painting” (1917)
H&W, Pablo Picasso, “Picasso Speaks” (1923)

5. Spt. 20, 22
H&W, Percy Wyndham Lewis, “Our Vortex” (1914)
H&W: Kasimir Malevich, From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting (1915-16)
H&W, Olga Rozanova, “The Basis of the New Creation” (1913)
H&W, De Stijl: “Manifesto 1” (1918)
H&W, Theo van Doesburg, from Principles of Neo-Plastic Art (1917-25)
H&W, Piet Mondrian, Neo-Plasticism: the General Principle of Plastic Equivalence (1920-21) and “Plastic and Pure Plastic Art” (1937)

6. Sept. 27, 29
First Take Home Exam, Sept 27, due Monday, October 4, 4:00PM.
Readings:
H&W, Oswald Spengler, from The Decline of the West (1918)
H&W, Alexander Blok, The Decline of Humanism” (1918)
H&W, P. Wyndham Lewis, “The Children of the New Epoch” (1924)
Handout: Jose Ortega y Gasset, from The Dehumanization of Art (1925)
H&W, Hugo Ball, “Dada Fragments” (1916-17)
H&W, Marcel Duchamp, “The Richard Mutt Case” 1917
H&W, Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto 1918” (1918)
H&W, Richard Huelsenbeck, “First German Dada Manifesto” (1918-20)

7. Oct. 4, 6
Readings:
H&W, Andre Breton, from the “First Manifesto of Surrealism” (1924)
and “Surrealism and Painting” (1928)
H&W, Georges Bataille, “The Lugubrious Game” (1929)
H&W, Salvador Dali, “The Stinking Ass” (1930)

8. Oct. 11, 13
Readings: H&W, Osip Brik, “Photography vs. Painting” (1926)
H&W, Sigfried Kracauer, from “Mass and Ornament” (1927)
H&W, Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer” (1934) and “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
H&W, Theodor Adorno, “Letter to Benjamin” (1936)

9. Oct. 18, 20
Readings: H&W, Clement Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch” (1939) and “Towards a Newer Laocoon” (1940)
Jean-Paul Sartre, from Existentialism and Humanism (1946) and “The Search for the Absolute” (1948)
Handout: Hans Hofmann from The Search for the Real (1948)
H&W, Ad Reinhardt, “Art as Art” (1962)

10. Oct. 25, 27
Second Take Home Exam, Oct 25; due Wed, November 3rd, 4:00PM.
Readings: H&W, Lawrence Alloway, “The Arts and the Mass Media” (1958)
H&W, Marshall McLuhan, from Understanding Media (1964)
H&W, George Kubler, from The Shape of Time (1962)
H&W, Donald Judd, “Specific Objects” (1966)
H&W, Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture 1—3” (1966-67)
H&W, Sol Lewitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” (1967) and “Sentences on Conceptual Art” (1969)
H&W, Robert Smithson, “Cultural Confinement” (1972)

11. Nov. 1, 3
Readings: H&W, Jacques Derrida, from Of Grammatology (1967)
H&W, Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” (1969)
H&W, Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” (1971)

12. Nov. 8, 10
Readings: H&W, Leo Steinberg, “Other Criteria” (1968-72)
H&W, Rosalind Kraus, “A View of Modernism” (1972)

13. Nov. 15, 17
Readings: H&W, Jean-François Lyotard, Introduction to The Postmodern Condition (1979) and “What is Postmodernism?” (1982)
H&W, Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity—an Incomplete Project” (1980)

THANKSGIVING BREAK, November 21—20

14. Nov. 29, Dec. 1
Rosalind Kraus, from “The Originality of the Avant-garde” (1981)

Readings to be reviewed in final discussion/critique session:
H&W, Hal Foster, from “Subversive Signs” (1982)
Take Home Final to be posted December 1st — due December 8th, 4:30PM.

16. Dec. 8
Final Exam and Class Discussion/Critique What’s Next: A Metamodern Emergence?